

SPIRITUAL TASK—STRENGTH IN THE WORD (Judges 16)

by the Rev. David Roth at the New Church of Boulder Valley

Story Samson was a very strong man. His strength came from his obedience to his Nazarite oath—but more specifically it came from his hair. Delilah tried to find out this secret. She slowly wore him down till he gave up worrying about keeping his covenant and his hair and shared his secret. She told the lords of the Philistines about his secret; they had his head shaved and then gouged out his eyes and threw him in prison.

Meaning Samson's strength came from his hair. Hair in the Word represents literal truths from the Word. Delilah represents selfish delight. The lords of the Philistines picture the influence of evil or hell in our lives. They use selfish delights to break down our dependence upon and interest in the Lord's Word—the habit of reading and studying it. When we lose this we lose our spiritual strength and are imprisoned by evil and blinded to the truth, as pictured by what happened to Samson.

Task We need to get in the habit of reading the Word every day—it isn't really an option. We are taught: "The Word gives life to those who devoutly read it" (*Sacred Scripture* 19); "The Lord can only flow in when the thoughts and intentions which are from lust are held in check by truths from the Word" (*Apocalypse Explained* 239); and "It is by means of the truths in people that the Lord has the power to save them; for people are reformed and regenerated and are at the same time taken out of hell and introduced into heaven, by means of truths from the sense of the letter of the Word" (*Sacred Scripture* 49). This week, read the Word every day.